Amendments to the Claims:

1. (currently amended) A method for forming a gate dielectric for an integrated circuit device, the method comprising:

forming an initial heavily nitrided oxynitride layer upon a substrate material, said initial heavily nitrided oxynitride layer having an initial thickness; and

subjecting said initial heavily nitrided oxynitride layer to a plasma nitridation, said plasma nitridation resulting in a final oxynitride layer, said final oxynitride layer having a final thickness,

wherein said final oxynitride layer has an equivalent oxide thickness of less than 15 angstroms and a nitrogen dosage of at least 2.0×10^{15} atoms/cm^2.

2. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said final thickness exceeds said initial thickness by less than 5 angstroms.

3. (previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said final thickness is less than 20 angstroms.

4-5. (canceled)

6. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein said initial heavily nitrided oxynitride layer is formed upon said substrate by:

ionically implanting nitrogen atoms into said substrate; and

oxidizing said substrate, following said substrate being ionically implanted with nitrogen atoms.

7. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein said initial heavily nitrided oxynitride layer is formed upon said substrate by rapid thermal nitric oxide (NO) deposition.

8. (original) The method of claim 6, wherein said final oxynitride layer further has a reduction in effective electron mobility, μ_{eff}, of less than 20% from the effective electron mobility of said initial oxynitride layer.

9-13. (canceled)

14. (new) The method of claim 6, wherein said ionic implantation results in said substrate having a nitrogen dosage of about 6.0×10^{14} to 1.0×10^{15} atoms/cm^2.